

REMARKS

This reply is in response to the Office Action dated February 4, 2009.

Claims 58-62, 64 and 65 are pending in the application and stand rejected.

Applicant has amended claims 58, 64, and 65 and added new claims 73-85 to more clearly recite aspects of the invention. Applicant has also amended claims 59 and 60 to correct unintentional, antecedent basis informalities. No new matter has been added.

Entry of the foregoing amendments and reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 60 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Applicant has amended claim 60, obviating the rejection. Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claim 60 is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 58-59, 61-62, 64-65 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Brown (U.S. Patent No. 3,524,325; hereafter "*Brown*"). The Examiner asserts that *Brown* discloses a distributed buoyancy region comprising two or more spatially arranged discrete buoyancy solutions 38 directly attached to said distributed buoyancy region to create a positively buoyant inverse catenary section connecting a first and second pipeline in fluid communication.

Applicant has amended claim 58, obviating the rejection. At the very least, *Brown* does not teach, show, or suggest a distributed buoyancy region comprising two or more spatially arranged discrete buoyancy solutions directly attached to said distributed buoyancy region to create a positively buoyant inverse catenary section connecting a first and second pipeline section in fluid communication when said distributed buoyancy solutions are located below the waterline, as required in claim 58, as amended, and those dependent therefrom. *Brown* discloses a temporary inverse catenary section in pipe 32 that connects two underwater complexes (10, 20). *See, e.g.*, Figure 6. The temporary inverse catenary section of pipe 32 is not positively

buoyant, and is supported at its midpoint by an auxiliary lay barge 28 with a shoe 36. Col. 4, ll. 46-47. Once the pipe 32 is connected to the two complexes (10, 20) the auxiliary lay barge 28 allows the shoe 36 to descend to the ocean bottom 22 thereby laying the pipe 32 "on its side." Col. 4, ll. 65-70. Pipe 32 is not positively buoyant; otherwise, the pipe 32 would not sink as taught by *Brown*. Once the pipe 32 is laid onto the ocean bottom 22, the shoe 36 is disconnected from the pipe 32 along with the flotation means 38. Col. 4, ll. 70-72. Accordingly, *Brown* does not teach, show, or suggest a positively buoyant inverse catenary section, as required in claim 58, as amended, and those dependent therefrom. For at least this reason, withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Moreover, the flotation means 38 and the auxiliary lay barge 28 are not located below the waterline when *Brown's* inverse catenary section in pipe 32 is temporarily formed. Therefore, at the very least, *Brown* does not teach, show, or suggest a positively buoyant inverse catenary section connecting a first and second pipeline section in fluid communication when said distributed buoyancy solutions are located below the waterline, as required in claim 58, as amended, and those dependent therefrom. For at least this reason, withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 60 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Brown*. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection for reasons discussed above. Since claim 60 includes all the limitations of claim 58, claim 60 is allowable for at least the same reasons.

Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the claim is respectfully requested.

Claims 58, 59, 61, 62, 64-65 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Harrison (U.S. Patent No. 4,909,670; hereafter *Harrison*) in view of *Brown*.

Applicant has amended base claim 58, obviating the rejection. At the very least, a combination of *Harrison* and *Brown* does not teach, show, or suggest a distributed buoyancy region comprising two or more spatially arranged discrete buoyancy solutions directly attached to said distributed buoyancy region to create a positively buoyant inverse catenary section connecting a first and second pipeline section in fluid communication when said distributed

buoyancy solutions are located below the waterline, as required in claim 58, as amended and those dependent therefrom. *Brown* has been discussed and distinguished above. *Harrison* discloses a single, concentrated buoy 20 that is temporarily attached to a pipeline 10 to create a vertical deflection in the pipeline 10 to maintain axial tension in the pipeline 10. Col. 2, ll. 30-40.

Therefore, the combination of *Harrison* and *Brown* does not teach, show, or suggest a distributed buoyancy region comprising two or more spatially arranged discrete buoyancy solutions directly attached to said distributed buoyancy region to create a positively buoyant inverse catenary section connecting a first and second pipeline section in fluid communication when said distributed buoyancy solutions are located below the waterline, as required in the claims. For at least this reason, withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

New claims 73-85 are allowable for the reasons discussed above. Allowance of claims 73-85 is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims are now in condition for allowance. Applicant invites the Examiner to telephone the undersigned attorney if there are any issues outstanding which have not been addressed to the Examiner's satisfaction.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date

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